

Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Don't take the flu to Grandma's house for the holidays

DEAR SHAWN: How can I prevent getting the flu this year?

Worried in Indiana

DEAR WORRIED: Get a flu shot. And practice respiratory etiquette.
Shawn

Shawn Richards, Indiana State Department of Health respiratory epidemiologist, says the flu is "out there."

"It's going to come every year, and it's a vaccine-preventable disease," she says. "We usually get the first case in Indiana around the end of November or the first of December."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that between 10 and 20 percent of the population get the flu each year. An average of 114,000 persons nationwide is hospitalized for flu-related complications, and about 36,000 Americans die on average per year from the complications of flu, according to the CDC.

Richards says that for 18 of the last 22 years, the flu season has "peaked" towards the end of January or early February, about six to eight weeks after the first case is con-

firmed. The peak represents the highest level of influenza incidence, Richards says.

She says it takes about two weeks for a person to be fully protected after getting a flu shot, and people should get a flu shot even though the flu virus may be circulating. The protection may not be at full capacity before the 14th day, but antibodies are building and getting stronger every day until it's at full strength.

She also urges people to practice "respiratory etiquette."

"Cover your mouth, preferably with a tissue, when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as often as possible. Stay at home if you have a fever. Don't be a hero (by going to work or school); you're just going to get other people sick," she said. "Practice the rule of three. If you feel like you're getting the flu or know someone near you may have the flu, keep a three-foot distance. You don't have to be right next to someone to get the flu. Influenza viral droplets may travel up to three feet when you cough or sneeze."



Photo by Daniel Axler

The weather is turning inclement, and respiratory epidemiologist Shawn Richards has advice for avoiding getting the flu.

Richards adds, "We have seen the first cases of flu earlier than usual this year, and that means the peak may be right around the holidays. Take precautions now against the flu. You don't want to give the flu to grandma as a Christmas present."

She says frequent hand washing is important because as we cough or sneeze, the

See FLU– Page 2



Judy Rose, R.D. is director of the Indiana State Department of Health Community Nutrition Program.

In this interview, she offers her thoughts on fast food restaurants and healthful eating.

Q: Fast food restaurants seem to be getting a lot of the blame for the fattening of America. Are they doing anything about this?

A: Yes, many of the fast food restaurants are responding to the criticism. For instance, Subway is heavily promoting their lower fat options – the sandwiches with 6 grams of fat. McDonald's is offering an adult "happy meal." They give a stepometer, which measures how much you walk, with

a salad and bottled water combo.

Q: What else are fast food restaurants doing?

A: Taco Bell has introduced a lighter selections menu. You can either order your meal "fresco," which is with salsa instead of cheese and sauce, or regular. At Arby's the nutrition information is on the walls rather prominently, so as you're standing in line waiting to order you can see how many calories and fat grams there are in the items you plan on ordering.

Q: What about the kids' meals that have the special promotions with the toys inside. Are those changing?

A: Yes, many of the fast food restaurants are trying out more healthful offerings for kids. KFC has added applesauce to its kids' meals. The Subway kids' meal has a deli sandwich on a round roll, instead of the 6-inch or 12-inch rolls, and juice and a fruit

roll-up. Some fast food restaurants are testing apple wedges, already peeled and sliced. But stay away from the caramel sauce! Moms, remove the caramel sauce before the kids even see it.

Q: What else?

A: I understand that Wendy's is testing using milk instead of soda and fresh fruit cups instead of fries in their kids' meals. Also, McDonald's is testing Chicken McNuggets made with white meat instead of dark in some places. Burger King has a Kids' Meal and a Big Kids' Meal. But sometimes mom thinks the little one needs the same size as the older brother or sister and orders the bigger one. They don't really need to eat the same amount.

Q: Why do you think the fast food restaurants are making these changes?

See FOOD– Page 3

Baby, it's cold outside

Find ways to keep up your physical activity

There's basketball season and football season and baseball season and soccer season.

But every season is physical activity season.

Yes, even in winter.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends a minimum of 30 minutes a day, most days of the week, of moderately intense physical activity for a healthy lifestyle.

"You're not going to do yourself any good by taking the winter season off," says Casey McIntire, executive director of the Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports. "Your body needs for you to be physically active whether it's cold or hot outside."

McIntire defined moderately intense physical activity as "anything that elevates your heart rate over time – like a brisk walk."

According to the Surgeon General, regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk for stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among older adults; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with

fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications.

But what about when it's cold, really cold? Or if it's raining or snowing?

McIntire has some suggestions.

"You do a lot of the same things that you do in the warmer months, like biking and walking, but you might have to go inside."

For those who work in downtown Indianapolis, there are several options, McIntire says. He says you can walk for "miles" using the tunnels and skywalks connecting various downtown complexes.

McIntire says those in the Indiana State Department of Health building can just walk across Washington Street, go through Parisian anchoring Circle City Mall and take the escalator up one flight, walk to the Arts Garden near Off-Track Betting. If you don't enter the Mall at Parisian, simply find your way to the Arts Garden.

From there, McIntire says, escalate down to the basement level and the tunnels begin. The first tunnel will take you to the Statehouse. From there, walkers can follow tunnels to Government Center South or Government Center North. There is also a tunnel



Photo by Daniel Axler

Casey McIntire says Circle City Mall is a convenient place to get indoor exercise.

nel connecting the two Government Center buildings.

McIntire says that the Mall skywalks also offer good walking opportunities. The skywalks connect to the Omni Sevrin Hotel to the south, the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown to the west, and through the Convention Center and the RCA Dome to the Crown Plaza Hotel at Union Station.

"All without getting cold," McIntire says.

If you don't work downtown and don't have daily access to the tunnels and skywalks, McIntire has other suggestions.

See **ACTIVITY** – Page 4

Flu: Vaccination will lessen severity in case you get the flu

(continued from page 1)

viral agents of influenza can get on your hands, which might go to your eyes, nose, or mouth when you rub them or to the pen or pencil you pick up.

Of the viral agents, Richards says, "You can't see them or smell them, or taste them. But they're there."

According to the CDC, some of the complications caused by flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children may get sinus problems and ear infections as complications from the flu. Those aged 65 years and older and persons of any age with chronic medical conditions are at highest risk for serious complications of flu.

Richards says that influenza is a respiratory disease, not a gastrointestinal disease. Symptoms include fever higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, and/or sore throat with no known cause (such as strep throat).

Influenza is diagnosed through labora-

tory testing at the ISDH virology lab and the CDC, Richards says.

"Influenza is not a reportable disease," she says. "We rely on the Influenza Sentinel Surveillance Program. We recruit physicians, university health centers, hospitals, and urgent care facilities to report to the CDC on a weekly basis the total number of patients they see, as well as the number of people who present with flu-like symptoms. Additionally, we request that they submit, at our expense, nasopharyngeal swabs to the ISDH virology lab. Our lab has the ability to detect Influenza A or Influenza B and to subtype, which is especially important this year."

Richards says the strain of virus this year is not an exact match with the virus in this year's vaccine, but getting a flu shot will lessen the severity of the disease.

The CDC, Richards says, has identified Influenza A Fujian as the vast majority of the confirmed infections nationwide. Influenza A Panama is in this year's vaccine, she says. Richards warns that the Fujian strain is virulent, and advises getting the flu shot.



"It's important to be vaccinated to make you less sick in case you do get the flu. The vaccine is still effective, but not quite so much if this year's virus strain were the same as in the vaccine. The flu can put you out for two to 10 days," Richards says. "By vaccinating ourselves and practicing respiratory etiquette, we can make other people not as vulnerable to the disease."

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World AIDS Day is December 1

As part of World AIDS Day December 1, Indiana State Department of Health's [Division of HIV/STD](#) and [Office of Minority Health](#) will sponsor a two-and-a-half-day faith-based retreat aimed at AIDS prevention.

Some 150 pastors and church leaders from around the state will attend the second annual Black Church HIV/AIDS Training Institute December 1-3 in Indianapolis. The retreat will be facilitated by the Balm in Gilead, a national, nonprofit organization whose mission is to work through Black churches to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in the African-American community and to support those infected with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS. The Balm in Gilead's program is supported and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Conference attendees will have the opportunity to discuss openly the HIV/AIDS epidemic and develop strategies for the inclusion of faith communities in HIV prevention efforts in Indiana.

The conference will kick off with a dinner in conjunction with the Community of Love Observes World AIDS Day.

Michael Butler, director of the HIV/STD Division, says, "World AIDS Day

is important because many people no longer realize the threat HIV poses to them. If we can keep the attention on HIV and the devastating affects it has on people, then we can make a significant impact."

An estimated 3,511 Hoosiers are currently living with AIDS, and another 3,648 Hoosiers are currently living with HIV. Since the epidemic began, more than 4,000 people in Indiana have died from AIDS.

One-third of the 7,159 Hoosiers currently living with HIV disease are African-American, even though African-Americans are 8.3 percent of the state's population. In Indiana, African-Americans account for 43 percent of AIDS cases among women.

Other World AIDS Day events include:

 **CIRCLE CITY HIV/AIDS COALITION**
WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE

6-7 p.m., Jesus Metropolitan Community Church. Activities include a memorial service designed to raise awareness and remember Hoosiers lost to HIV/AIDS; the Names Project Memorial Quilt will be on display.

 **COMMUNITY OF LOVE OBSERVES**
WORLD AIDS DAY

5-8 p.m., Westin Hotel, downtown Indianapolis.

Outstanding Dedication Award Presentation. Dinner reception, raffle, silent auction, and fashion show.

 **CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH**
WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE

7 p.m., Central Christian Church, Indianapolis. Community-wide candlelight service. Panels from the Names Project memorial quilt will be on display.

 **AIDS MINISTRIES, ELKHART**

5 p.m., church service at Agape Missionary Baptist Church

 **World AIDS Day Community Awareness Day**

Goshen College, 7-9 p.m.

 **EAST CENTRAL INDIANA AIDS TASK FORCE, JAY COUNTY**

Thru December 9, various informational programs

 **PORTLAND**

Mayoral proclamation proclaiming December 1-7 AIDS Awareness Week

 **JAY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

December 1-5, AIDS awareness and education

 **BALL STATE UNIVERSITY**

December 4-9, panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display, Student Union Hall

Food: Consumers need to practice conscious eating

(continued from page 1)

A: It's all in response to consumer demand. We're their livelihood. They're not there to police us.

Q: So, the trend is beginning to change.

A: No. There's still a market for the supersized meals. Like I said, the restaurants react to the consumers' desires. If we demand it, they're going to offer it.

Q: How about salads? Isn't that a good thing to order at a fast food restaurant?

A: It's what you choose and what you add to it. The main source of calories in salads is the dressing. And look out for other ingredients like real bacon and fried croutons. Be alert to what's on the salad.

Q: Lots of fast food restaurants have salad bars. Isn't that a good thing?

A: Again, it's all in what you choose and what you add to it. Salad bars can be ugly. All you can eat for one price tends to be a disaster. People want to get their money's worth so they load their plate and often load it with the wrong things. The choices are there, we just don't always make the right ones.

Q: You've been talking about people wanting to get their money's worth at salad

bars. What about supersized meals? Aren't those good bargains?

A: Supersize is not a bargain even if it costs less money. It'll cost you more in effort to get that weight off than you'll save in pennies. It's more than we need to eat. Get a supersize and split it, then it's a bargain. And another serious consequence of habitually choosing supersize is that it becomes a habit. We expect that amount all the time, and if we get accurate portions, we feel cheated.

Q: Applebee's has an agreement with Weight Watchers to offer Weight Watchers meals at the restaurant and to list the Weight Watchers points on the menu. What do you think of that?

A: That's a plus, but often things like that result in no sales.

Q: There's a move by the Food and Drug Administration to require fast food restaurants to label their menus with nutrition information similar to what's on the back of food packages. Is that a good thing?

A: It's not going to solve everything, but

it's a step in the right direction. It's up to the consumer to make the right choices.

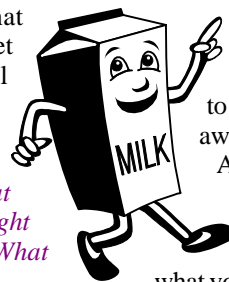
Q: The fast food restaurants are everywhere, and in today's fast-paced lifestyle, we seem to eat in them a lot. What advice do you have for us?

A: It's all on the menu. When you're standing in line, looking at the menu on the wall, and waiting to order, you have to make choices.

If it's deep fried, don't purchase it. Stay away from fries. Children should have milk or orange juice. Or if it has to be a soda, make it a diet soda. Stay away from heavily sauced or supersized. Also, ask them to leave off the mayonnaise or their own special sauce on the burgers or other sandwiches. Portion size is also important no matter what you're eating.

Q: What else do you suggest?

A: We have to stop and think. We have to learn to say "no" and practice conscious eating. We need to eat consciously, not mindlessly and be aware of what we're eating and why. The Number 1 reason we eat things we shouldn't is because it is there.



Activity: Hula hoops, pogo sticks, and sleds — oh, my!

(continued from page 2)

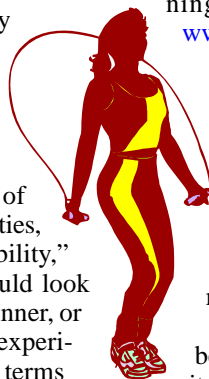
He says there are thousands of videos and DVDs that people can rent or buy that they can be physically active along with. McIntire says many can be checked out from libraries, health clubs, or hospital rehab centers.

"They can instruct in all sorts of aerobic or strength training activities, and they teach to all levels of ability," McIntire says. "Beginners should look for descriptors such as easy, beginner, or low impact. More advanced or experienced exercisers should look for terms like challenging, complex, or high impact."

McIntire adds that lots of equipment — such as stationary bikes, treadmills, and rowing machines — can be purchased to help with indoor exercising, but that sometimes can get expensive.

If you already own a bicycle, you can purchase a trainer, which is a device that you can put your bicycle on and use as a stationary bike. Inexpensive items include surgical tubing or elastic bands for strength training or jump ropes for convenient cardiovascular workouts, McIntire says.

For people in the Indianapolis area, he says there are opportunities for indoor exercise through Indy in Motion's "A Walk in the Park" program sponsored by the Marion County Health Department, Indy Parks, and the National Institute for Fitness and Sport. Several Indianapolis parks offer walking,



strength training, and aerobics in the evenings. For more information, go to www.mchd.com/iim_launch.htm.

For those outside Indianapolis and for other opportunities, check with your local health clubs, fitness centers, YMCAs, or YWCAs to see what they might offer for indoor physical exercise.

McIntire urges people to consider outdoor walking, even in the winter months.

"There are plenty of stores that will be glad to sell you specialty clothing items designed to keep you warm in just about any temperature," he says.

But don't think only in terms of the "traditional" forms of exercise.

"Moderately intense physical activity can easily be achieved by playing with your kids," McIntire says. "Hula hoops, pogo sticks, and sleds are all guaranteed to raise your heart rates! Snowball fights, driveway shoveling, and snowman building are also good winter-specific activities that qualify as moderately intense."

For those people who enjoy more rigorous winter activities here are some possibilities:

★Ice skating and hockey

Indy Parks: Ellenberger and Perry parks, Indianapolis

www6.indygov.org/indyparks/index.html

Pan Am Plaza, downtown Indianapolis

★Cross country skiing (when conditions are right)

Indy Parks: Eagle Creek Park, Indianapolis www6.indygov.org/indyparks/index.html

★Sledding

Butler University, Indianapolis, hill near Hinkle Fieldhouse

Indy Parks: Garfield and Southeastway parks, Indianapolis

www6.indygov.org/indyparks/index.html

★Bicycling

Central Indiana Bicycling Association
Group rides during the winter

www.CIBArise.org

★Group hiking

Indianapolis Hiking Club

<http://community-2.webtv.net/indyhike/THEINDIANAPOLIS/>

★Indoor rock climbing

Climb Time, Indianapolis and Carmel

www.climbtimeindy.com

Hoosier Heights, Bloomington

www.hoosierheights.com

★Downhill skiing www.skisite.com/downhillList.cfm?state=IN

Perfect North Slopes, Lawrenceburg

Piney Peak, Valparaiso

Paoli Peaks, Paoli

★Competitive sports leagues

Indy Parks www6.indygov.org/indyparks/index.html

Check with your local fitness centers, YWCA, YMCA, church leagues, etc.

New program designed to help people "do what they do better"

A new program in the HIV/STD Division at the Indiana State Department of Health is aimed at helping people "do what they do better," says the program's manager, Cathy Archey-Morgan.

The focus of the new Training and Development Program is to assess the needs of HIV/STD/Hepatitis staff, prevention and care services planning bodies, funded prevention and care projects, and community partners.

"We will determine through assessment what skills sets and functional needs our various clients have, and then find ways to meet those needs," she said.

The HIV/STD Division facilitates three statewide planning and advisory groups: the HIV Prevention Community Planning Group, comprising about 40 members who reflect the demographics of the state and the risks groups in the communities; the 15-member HIV Consumer Advisory Board, whose members must be either HIV positive or the parent of a child who is HIV posi-

tive; and the Comprehensive HIV Services Planning and Advisory Council, comprising about 40 members experienced in the delivery or receipt of HIV-related health and human services.

More than 25 funded prevention projects and care providers around the state will benefit from needs assessment and training, Archey-Morgan said. These include Brothers Uplifting Brothers, Gary; Damien Center, Indianapolis; Latino Institute, Indianapolis; Positive Link, Bloomington; and AIDS Resource Group, Evansville.

Community partners also will benefit from the new program. Community partners include agencies and organizations such as faith-based organizations, local health departments, and community-based organizations that HIV/STD works with but does not necessarily fund.

The Training and Development Program is an expansion of HIV/STD's Capacity Building Program coordinated by Trevor Bradley. The Capacity Building Program focuses on communities of color around the

state and faith-based organizations.

One resource Archey-Morgan plans to tap in to will be the free Technical Assistance Providers funded through the CDC. The CDC program provides consultants or staff to assist with training in needed areas.

Archey-Morgan said the areas of assistance could range from behavioral science (changing behaviors of at-risk populations) to epidemiology (understanding the numbers and data) to board development, conflict resolution, fiscal management, resource development, grant writing, or communication skills.

"We will be resourceful in our efforts," she said. "We may find we need to develop new curriculums. We will be collaborating with others — we will be thinking outside the box, outside HIV/AIDS, outside the health realm, and outside our own area. This new program will enable us to expand our capacity to help those we serve."

HIV/STD is in the process of hiring a health educator for the new program.